Claims

1. A sole for an article of footwear, the sole comprising:

a load distribution plate disposed in a heel region of the sole;

a cushioning element disposed proximate the load distribution plate, the cushioning element configured and located to determine a cushioning property of the sole during a first ground contact with the heel region; and

a guidance element disposed proximate the load distribution plate, the guidance element configured and located to bring a wearer's foot into a neutral position after the first ground contact.

2. The sole of claim 1 further comprising a second guidance element disposed proximate the load distribution plate, the second guidance element configured and located to bring the wearer's foot into the neutral position after the first ground contact.

3. The sole of claim 2 further comprising a stability element disposed proximate the load distribution plate, the stability element configured and located to avoid excessive pronation during transition to a rolling-off phase of a step cycle.

4. The sole of claim 1, wherein the cushioning element is generally located in a lateral rear quadrant of the heel region.

5. The sole of claim 1, wherein the guidance element is generally located in a lateral forward quadrant of the heel region.

6. The sole of claim 2, wherein the second guidance element is generally located in a medial rear quadrant of the heel region.

7. The sole of claim 3, wherein the stability element is generally located in a medial forward quadrant of the heel region.

8. The sole of claim 3, wherein the cushioning element, the guidance element, the second guidance element, and the stability element are spaced apart.

9. The sole of claim 8 further comprising at least one reinforcing element disposed between at least one of the cushioning element and the guidance element, the guidance element and the second guidance element, the second guidance element and the stability element, the stability element and the cushioning element, the cushioning element and the second guidance element, and the guidance element and the stability element.

10. The sole of claim 3, wherein at least one of the guidance element, the second guidance element, and the stability element has a greater hardness than the cushioning element.

11. The sole of claim 3, wherein the hardness of at least one of the guidance element, the second guidance element, and the stability element varies.

12. The sole of claim 3, wherein the stability element extends beyond an edge of the load distribution plate.

13. The sole of claim 3, wherein the load distribution plate has a generally recumbent U-shaped cross-sectional profile and receives in an interior region thereof at least a portion of one of the cushioning element, the guidance element, the second guidance element, and the stability element.

14. The sole of claim 13, wherein the closed end of the load distribution plate is oriented towards a forefoot portion of the sole.

15. The sole of claim 3 further comprising an outsole at least partially disposed below the cushioning element, the guidance element, the second guidance element, and the stability element.

16. An article of footwear comprising an upper and a sole, the sole comprising:

a load distribution plate disposed in a heel region of the sole;

a cushioning element disposed proximate the load distribution plate, the cushioning element configured and located to determine a cushioning property of the sole during a first ground contact with the heel region; and

a guidance element disposed proximate the load distribution plate, the guidance element configured and located to bring a wearer's foot into a neutral position after the first ground contact.

17. The article of footwear of claim 16 further comprising a second guidance element disposed proximate the load distribution plate, the second guidance element configured and located to bring the wearer's foot into the neutral position after the first ground contact.

18. The article of footwear of claim 17, further comprising a stability element disposed proximate the load distribution plate, the stability element configured and located to avoid excessive pronation during transition to a rolling-off phase of a step cycle.

19. The article of footwear of claim 18, wherein the cushioning element is generally located in a lateral rear quadrant of the heel region, the guidance element is generally located in a lateral forward quadrant of the heel region, the second guidance element is generally located in a medial rear quadrant of the heel region, and the stability element is generally located in a medial forward quadrant of the heel region.

20. An article of footwear comprising an upper and a sole, the sole comprising:

a load distribution plate disposed in a heel region of the sole;

a cushioning element disposed proximate the load distribution plate, the cushioning element generally located in a lateral rear quadrant of the heel region and configured to determine a cushioning property of the sole during a first ground contact with the heel region;

a first guidance element disposed proximate the load distribution plate, the first guidance element generally located in a lateral forward quadrant of the heel region and configured to bring a wearer's foot into a neutral position after the first ground contact;

a second guidance element disposed proximate the load distribution plate, the second guidance element generally located in a medial rear quadrant of the heel region and configured to bring the wearer's foot into the neutral position after the first ground contact; and

a stability element disposed proximate the load distribution plate, the stability element generally located in a medial forward quadrant of the heel region and configured to avoid excessive pronation during transition to a rolling-off phase of a step cycle.